Lucy

I love the Bulwark the way you love a bad neighborhood bar. It tries to keep you safe, it carries your weight, and it swears it can handle anything… right up until two strangers in cheap ships and expensive confidence remind you what lowsec really is: a place where "safe" is something people sell.

Tonight I Undock in Lucy

So tonight I don't undock in the Bulwark.

Tonight I undock in *Lucy*.

The Venture looks like a tool. Not a weapon. Not a statement. Not a dare. It looks like something a bored academy instructor hands you with a smile that says *you'll be back for your insurance payout soon*. It's smaller. Lighter. Faster. A runner's body instead of a brawler's. It doesn't promise much, but it doesn't lie, either.

Leaving the Academy

I slip out of Emperor Family Academy like a person leaving a party early, trying not to make eye contact with anyone who might ask questions. Space outside the station is the same old cathedral of light and shadow, all gold glare and black depth. The kind of view that makes you forget you are one bad decision away from dying in silence.

07:25 AMARR time.

Course set: Faswiba. Low security. 0.4. A number that looks harmless until you learn what it means. Numbers don't tell you about the way your gut tightens when local spikes. Or how your hands hover over controls like they belong to somebody else. Or how the directional scanner becomes a kind of prayer you repeat every few seconds just to feel like the universe can hear you.

Going Alone

I go alone. No escorts. No backup. No corp wingmen to laugh if I panic-warp to a moon like a rookie.

Just me and Lucy and the knowledge that somewhere out there, the kind of people who kill the Bulwark are awake and looking for the next easy story.

Welcome to Faswiba

Faswiba welcomes me with that ugly, familiar calm. The kind that feels staged. Empty lanes, dull stars, and a sense that something watches from behind the scenery. In lowsec you start to believe space itself has an expression. Not angry. Not even cruel. Just… amused.

I drop into the first belt and the rocks are already waiting. Dark shapes tumble slow, glittering with promise. Kernite—good money, good risk, good bait.

The Ritual

I do the ritual: align out, overview clean, d-scan, check local, check d-scan again, then one more time like it makes the universe honest. Then I open the miners.

The first pull of ore hits the hold like a soft thump, reassuring in a way that is probably unhealthy. I always forget how addictive mining is. It is the closest thing New Eden has to meditation, except the temple is full of knives.

Sansha's Nation Arrive

Then the Sansha's Nation arrive.

Three of them at first. NPCs. The universe's way of reminding you that even when capsuleers aren't trying to kill you, the setting itself still wants a piece. Their ships slide in like roaches under a door, red markers blooming on the overview.

I launch the Hobgoblins.

Two drones. That's all Lucy can carry right now. Two angry little metal insects with lasers for teeth. They buzz off into the dark and start tearing into the Snasha's while I watch my shields like they're my pulse on a hospital monitor.

The shields hold.

The Knock in the Next Room

That feels good. Too good. The kind of good that makes you start believing again.

The Sansha's break and drift into wreckage, but the belt doesn't relax. Faswiba doesn't relax. Lowsec never relaxes. It just changes what it is threatening you with.

Four more hostile ships appear on scan.

Not on grid yet. Not firing. Just *there*, like a knock you hear in the next room when you know you live alone.

I don't wait to see what kind of knock it is.

Warp.

The Venture snaps out like a scared animal, and the stars smear into lines. In the quiet between belts, I realize I'm holding my breath. I let it out slow. My hands stay steady, but my head doesn't. My thoughts keep circling back to the Bulwark—big and stubborn, slow as a prayer, dead before it knows it's dying.

Losing More Than a Ship

The thing about losing a ship is that it's never just losing the ship. It's losing the confidence you wear like armor. It's losing the illusion that preparation is always enough. The Bulwark does what it's built to do. It just isn't built for *that*—two gankers with patience, coordination, and whatever cold joy drives people to hunt miners like they're game.

Lucy is different. Lucy doesn't feel brave. Lucy feels smart.

Mining Anyway

In the next belt, I find Kernite again. More rocks, more quiet, more of that glittering promise. I start the lasers, keep aligned, keep scanning. The Hobgoblins hover close like they know I'm jumpy.

Sansha's Nation are all over the system. That part is clear now. Their presence isn't a random event. It's a pattern. Like an infection. You feel them in the space lanes: their little patrols, their sudden spawns, their constant insistence that nothing here is ever truly yours—not your ore, not your time, not even your attention.

I mine anyway.

Because that is what you do in New Eden. You accept the terms you hate because the alternative is staying docked forever, polishing your ship and telling yourself you are "planning."

Full Hold

The ore hold fills up faster than I expect. The Venture isn't glamorous, but it works. It's the kind of ship that survives by not being worth the trouble, and that is a kind of wisdom.

By 07:49, the hold is full. Kernite stacks tight like stolen gold.

Time to go home.

The return trip feels longer, even though the ship is fast. That is the other trick of lowsec: leaving is always harder than arriving. You spend the whole run imagining the worst. A gate flash. A yellow box. A scram. Your ship freezing in place like a nightmare where your legs won't work.

But the gates stay quiet.

Safe Return

I dock up, dump the ore, and watch the station swallow Lucy like a mouth closing.

Then I sit there for a minute, listening to nothing. You never realize how loud your own fear is until it stops.

Repairs are minor. Lucy takes the Blood Raiders without flinching. That feels like a small victory. Not the kind you sing about. The kind you carry in your pocket like a coin you rub when you need reminding.

Remembering the Bulwark

And then, inevitably, my thoughts go back to the Bulwark.

I still love that ship. Even wrecked, even gone, it has weight in my memory. The Procurer feels like commitment. Like planting a flag in hostile ground and daring the universe to argue. Lucy is the opposite: Lucy is a confession. *I am alone. I am learning. I am trying to live long enough to get better.*

If I take another Procurer out into the void, it is going to be different. I max the drone bay. I stop pretending a slow tank is the same thing as safety. I respect the simple truth: in lowsec, you are never tanking against damage. You are tanking against *attention*.

Because attention is what kills you out there.

A hunter's attention.

A system's attention.

A moment's attention where you get comfortable and forget to check d-scan.

Not Done Yet

I plan the next route with the ore profits still warm in my mind. Maybe one more run before I call it a night. Maybe I push my luck. Maybe I do the sensible thing and sleep.

New Eden doesn't care which choice I make.

But I do.

And for the first time since the Bulwark dies, I feel like I'm learning how to survive the kind of space that eats slow ships and softer people.

Lucy waits in the hangar.

Small.

Fast.

Honest.

Lowsec is still out there, smiling in the dark.

And I'm not done with it yet.